



## Grant writing tips

Grants have become increasingly competitive in the last decade. Yet grant funding is essential for a healthy academic research career. In this increasingly competitive environment it is essential that you to give yourself a fighting chance in the granting game.

Fundamentally a grant application is a package of information that sells your research, and your team, to the funding body.

### So... where do I start?

You have found your funding opportunity and you are ready to write your application. Start by reading the guidelines. Read the eligibility criteria with care - are you able to apply for the grant? You do not want to be eliminated from the assessment process in step one, particularly if you have invested time writing the application.

Complete some background research into the funding body. What have they funded beforehand? What are their goals and motivations for providing research funding? Is your proposed research project a good match?

### Planning is key

Familiarise yourself with the application documents and aim to collect the necessary information early in the process. The Faculty Research Liaison Officer and the Research Office staff can help you with frequently asked for information such as CSU's ABN, charity status and administrative details.

Plan how you will address the selection criteria and leave time for the actual writing. Sound familiar? It is the same advice you probably give your students. Ensure you plan to review and proofread your application.

**Fact Sheet 2** – Grant process timeline outlines the grant application timeline at Charles Sturt. It is essential to build in this internal approval timeline as all grant applications must be approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor – Research & Engagement on behalf of Charles Sturt. You cannot submit your application without DVC-RE approval.

### What to include

A grant application is a comprehensive package outlining why your project should be funded. Good grant applications clearly state:

- Who will benefit?
- What is going to happen?
- Where is it going to happen?
- Why does it need to happen?
- When is it going to happen?
- How is it going to happen and how much will it cost?

You have to know this clearly in order to communicate it.

(Source: Fundamentals of Grant Writing, Regional Development Australia Tasmania).

### The writing process

Funding bodies consistently suggest that researchers write in an 'easy to understand' style, that clearly conveys why the grant should be funded.

By keeping your writing clear and concise reviewers can be sure of the need for the research, who will be undertaking the research, and the process (how, when & where) involved in undertaking the research. Simple

language sells the need for your research project. Be kind to the assessors, who are asked to assess multiple applications in a short period of time (similar to essay marking!).

Always keep the priorities of the funding body in mind during the writing process.

**Leanne Harvey, CEO, ARC** *“Write simple cohesive applications that align research with government priority areas”.*

Use the sections within the application documents. Don't make the assessors have to search to find the information that is asked for. If the information is not where it is expected they will move on. Tailor each grant application, don't try to make a previous application fit a new format.

## The question of money

Spend time estimating your project timeline and costs. Justify each item in accordance with the design of your project. Do the costs align with the aims, methodology and overall project design?

Use actual costs for your estimates. There is information on travel, accommodation and printing on the [CSU Finance](#) website.

Information on salaries for both academic and professional staff can be found on the [Human Resources Recruitment and appointment](#) webpages. It is important to include on-costs (superannuation and payroll tax) in the costings.

It is important to include the **in-kind costs** in your application. An 'in-kind' contribution is support that is non-monetary. In project grants, non-monetary contributions could include the use of office space or equipment, computers, software, photocopying and stationary. If salaries are not funded by the project, the proportion of time spent on the project should also be classed as an in-kind contribution.

In-kind contributions are looked on favourably by funding bodies. Not only do they reduce project costs, but they also add credibility as they confirm Charles Sturt's support for your project.

Will you ask for a leverage contribution to the project? For more information on the leverage see **Fact sheet 4**.

The Research Office has a [Budget Approval Form](#) which is a good tool for your final budget. The form links directly to salary costs and can calculate costs over multiple years. The BAF should be submitted to the Research Office with your grant application.

## More information

We have compiled some useful grant-writing resources to utilise in planning your application:

[Fundamentals of Grant Writing](#) – Regional Development Australia Tasmania

[Write Your Application](#) – US Department of Health and Human Services – National Institute of Health

[Writing a grant application](#) – Funding Centre Australia

[What Makes a Good Grant Application?](#) Commonwealth of Australia

The [Research Whisperer](#) is a blog dedicated to the topic of doing research in academia. One of the many topics covered in the blog is funding. Here are a couple of useful posts:

[Tips for capturing unicorns – writing your first successful application](#) – Adam Micolich in Research Whisperer

[Choosing the unicorns – An ECR's perspective on grant reviews](#) – Emma Birkett in Research Whisperer

The Charles Sturt Research Hub has information on applying for and managing a grant. [CSU Research](#).

## For help please contact:

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